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The Role of the School Social Worker with English Language Learner Students in Suburban Elementary Schools

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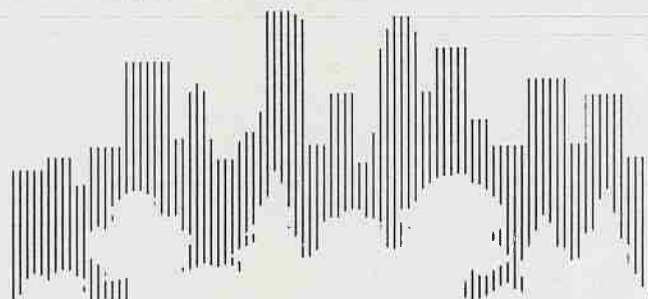
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MASTERS IN SOCIAL WORK THESIS

Pamela Sue Storry

**MSW
Thesis**

The Role of the School Social Worker with English
Language Learner Students in Suburban
Elementary Schools

Thesis
Storry

2000

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK
AUGSBURG COLLEGE
MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER WITH ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER STUDENTS IN SUBURBAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY ON THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER WITH ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER STUDENTS

PAMELA S. STORRY

MAY 7, 2000

This descriptive study explores the role of the school social worker with English Language Learner (ELL) students in suburban elementary schools. It has become increasingly more common for classrooms to have students who do not speak English and spend part of their school day in an English Language Learner class. The purpose of the study is to provide information and awareness of immigrant issues to school districts, social workers and teachers. Three school districts with similar demographics, northwest suburbs of a metropolitan area, participated in the study. A survey that included both quantitative and qualitative questions, focused on the role of the school social worker with English Language Learner (ELL) students, was sent to 38 elementary school social workers. Findings provided further information about the school social worker's role with ELL students in an elementary suburban school.

Dedication

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those who supported me throughout this endeavor. First, I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Dr. Lois Bosch and mentor, Claire Perry for my learning experience. It will be of great benefit to me throughout my social work career. I would also like to thank my family and friends for their help and understanding. Thanks to my parents for instilling in me the importance of education, values and goals. I want to express my thanks to my three wonderful children for all of their encouragement and support. Things never stay the same, and as you have grown so have I. Thanks for helping me during this part of my journey. I give a special thank-you to my husband, Alan, for believing in me so much. We accomplished this together. May the Divine Intervention that got me here be with me in my work and always.

Table of Contents

I.	Chapter I: Introduction.....	1-4
II.	Chapter II: Literature Review.....	5-21
	Theoretical Framework.....	5-7
	Historical Perspective.....	7-9
	The Role of the School Social Worker.....	9-19
III.	Chapter III: Methodology.....	22-28
IV.	Chapter IV: Findings.....	29-54
	Characteristics of the Sample Population.....	29-32
	Characteristics of the Elementary School.....	33-35
	School Social Work Roles.....	35-52
V.	Chapter V: Conclusion.....	55-67
	Practice Implications.....	55-61
	Policy Implications.....	62-65
	Future Research.....	66-67
VI.	References.....	68-73
VII.	Appendixes.....	69-80
VIII.	List of Tables	
	Tables 1,2 & 3.....	30
	Table 4.....	32
	Tables 5 & 6.....	34
	Tables 7 & 8.....	36
	Table 9.....	37
	Tables 10 & 11.....	40
	Tables 12 & 13.....	44
	Table 14.....	46
	Tables 15,16,17 & 18.....	48-49
	Table 19.....	51

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The first chapter of this research focuses on three areas. First, it identifies the research issue. This study examines the role of the school social worker with respect to the increase of immigrant children in suburban public schools. Secondly, it states the purpose and objectives of the research. The conclusion discusses the significance of the study and states the research question.

Increase of Immigrant Children in U.S. and its Impact on the Public Schools

The increase in immigration and school age children that are limited in their ability to speak English has directly influenced the school and the entire educational system (McDonald & Hill, 1993). The following research provides statistics on the increase of immigration, which helps to better understand its impact on the school and its influence on the role of the school social worker.

Immigration has become a main reason for population growth in this country. The U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (March 1998) revealed that 26.3 million immigrants live in the United States. This represents the largest number ever recorded in the nation's history. The immigrant population is growing 6.5 times faster than the native-born population (Camarota, 1999). As the population in the country changes so does the student population of the schools. Social workers are becoming increasingly aware of these changes as they adjust their role in the school to help immigrant students and their families.

The following statistics reflect past and future growth of immigrant children in schools. Between 1990-1998, 5.4 million children were born to immigrant women, which has significantly affected the number of school-age children. The 1998 U.S.

Census survey also shows that 15% of children of typical school ages, 5 to 17, had an immigrant mother. The impact of immigration on public schools will be even greater in the near future as the percentage of children approaching school age increases to nearly 18 % (Camarota, 1999). As this population grows the public school system must also change as it attempts to find ways to help immigrant students adjust to a new culture.

One of the biggest impacts for schools to cope with is the limited use of English by immigrant students and their families. Many of the immigrants coming into the country know very little English and speak only in their native language. For immigrants, knowing English may greatly influence their success in establishing a new life in the United States (Park, 1999). To better prepare immigrant students for their future, school districts provide English Language Learner (ELL) classes to help them learn English while they are attending school. It has become increasingly common for teachers to have students in their classrooms who are learning the English language. More teachers have needed to become “ teachers of the English language” and, with the increase in diversity, additional training is needed in this area (Gersten, 1996). In 1994-1995, it was estimated that 7 % of the students nationwide in public and private schools were limited in English (Feinberg & Morencia, 1998). By the year 2020, it is estimated that more than 4 million school-age children will need English instruction and other types of cross-cultural intervention to succeed in school (York, 1994). The future growth of this population will impose additional demands for school programs and make determining how best to teach and meet the educational needs of these students challenging.

The role of the school social worker can not only benefit immigrant students and their families, but also provide support to school staff as they adjust to working with an immigrant population. As the immigrant population has grown schools are faced with a number of problems. Poverty and limited education of many immigrant students, strained school resources, lack of ELL and bilingual teachers, shortage of instructional material in different languages, and cultural adjustment issues are some of the issues that schools are needing to address (McDonnell & Hill, 1993). School social workers can play an important role in a school as it adjusts to the impact of the increased needs of an immigrant population.

Immigrant and ELL students can also have an important role in their school. They can provide classrooms with knowledge and information about other countries and cultures. Schools can benefit from the linguistic skills and cultural experiences of immigrant students. For example, the Miami Coral Way Elementary School has assisted in the development of students Spanish skills for over 25 years. A similar program at the Oyster Elementary School in Washington D.C. has also been successful with integrating bi-lingual education (Lyons, 1990).

Bi-lingual programs are helping children in elementary schools to achieve the ability to communicate effectively in English and at least one other language. Most importantly students can learn to understand and respect other cultures (Gold, 1988). A part of multicultural education can include global education, which involves diversity at a global level and focuses on the interrelated systems of the world. The goal is for students to gain an understanding and respect for people and countries outside of the United

States. Students can learn that their own behaviors and choices can have a global influence on the interdependent systems of the world (Spencer, 1998).

Purpose of the Research

There are two purposes for this research. The first purpose is to more clearly define the role of the school social worker with ELL students. This role can vary from school to school and be influenced by the demographics of the area. The second purpose is to provide information and awareness about ELL issues for school districts, social workers, teachers, and other school personnel to further serve this population. By sharing strategies and interventions, school staff may be able to continue to improve the success of ELL students at school.

Significance of the Research

The significance of this study is twofold. First, an analysis of the data obtained from this questionnaire will be shared with the administration and social workers of the three participating school districts. Secondly, it will provide school social workers with an opportunity to further define their role with their school and their district regarding the issues of ELL students. The research question for this study is: What is the role of the school social worker in respect to English Language Learner students in suburban elementary schools?

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The public school system has been the primary institution for assimilating immigrant children into a new culture (Pryor, 1992). Immigrant children entering public schools have special needs that extend beyond academics, which often include the stress of learning a new language. As the student population changes the role of the school social worker has also changed. The increase of English Language Learner (ELL) students in schools has challenged school social workers to further define their role with this population.

This literature review focuses on four areas of interest: 1) the theoretical framework as it applies to school social work, 2) a historical perspective of the American Bilingual Education Act, 3) the role of the school social worker in respect to working with ELL students, and 4) gaps in the literature researched. The goal of this study is to seek answers to the research question: What is the role of the school social worker in respect to English Language Learner students in suburban elementary schools?

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on two theoretical frameworks. The first, an ecological perspective is used to apply this research to the school system. Secondly, a multicultural perspective is included as it involves work with people from different cultures.

The ecological perspective can provide social workers with a view of the behavioral and social functioning of individuals and families in an environment. It is often used as a foundation in school social work practice. It allows the school to be seen as a complex system and as a small part of a larger society. This view reflects the idea

that issues encountered in society and in schools may be similar or interrelated and will eventually determine some of the tasks and responsibilities that social workers, teachers, and other staff have in the school (Allen-Meares, 1996). The public school system is influenced by the changes in society. The increase in immigration has affected the school and in turn the school can influence the academic success and cultural adjustment of an immigrant student.

An ecological perspective provides a framework that includes an individual's social support system, such as family, friends, neighbors, and service providers. Their place in the individual's life can greatly influence the "goodness of fit" in the environment (Greene, 1994). This perspective is the most applicable approach, when considering social work practice in schools and for determining points of intervention. It gives attention to all of the involved systems and individuals, instead of one specific part. The focus is on the interactions of students with their environments. The social worker's role is to bring about or initiate change in individuals or the environment or both (Allen-Meares, 1996).

The other theoretical framework included in this study is a multicultural perspective, which allows social workers to recognize the many aspects of race and ethnic background and at the same time appreciate and find strengths in the differences of people (Dungee-Anderson & Beckett, 1995). It is needed by school social workers and staff in order to help immigrant students have a successful adjustment to their new school (Allen-Meares, 1994). A multicultural perspective necessitates being able to consider a number of dimensions of cultural relationships, allowing one to be aware of more than race and to also consider ethnicity, religion, geographic region, and

socioeconomic status. Social workers that practice a multicultural perspective do not need to be experts in a variety of different cultures, but they do need to have an awareness of cultural values that define their own and their client's behavior. Sensitivity to cultural differences without applying personal beliefs to a client's situation is an important part of this perspective. It encourages the social worker to seek out additional information from the client about values and customs that are unfamiliar to them (Dungee-Anderson & Beckett, 1995).

Consider Maya Angelou's inaugural poem,

"On the Pulse of Morning"

Here on the pulse of this day
 You may have the grace to look up and out
 And into your sister's eyes,
 And into your brother's face,
 Your country,
 And say simply
 With hope –
 Good Morning.

This poem portrays multiculturalism in simplistic terms and refers to the hope of accepting one another and valuing all groups of people (Freeman, 1995). This perspective can be easily blended with an ecological theory. The profession of social work values diversity and should be able to apply a multicultural perspective to practice skills (Grant & Haynes, 1995). It enables the school social worker to be aware of traditions, customs, beliefs, and values when working with ELL students and their families.

Historical Perspective

The following historical perspective provides insight as to how and why the federal government implemented English Language Learner classes in the public school

system. In 1967 a Texan Senator, Ralph Yarborough, presented S.428, the American Bilingual Education Act (BEA), which was an amendment to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Lyons, 1990). The intent of this legislation was to help Spanish speaking students that did not speak English with their educational needs. The act was to provide funding and coordination for three years.

The bilingual-education bill that became law was altered from the original version. Its focus changed from Spanish-speaking children to all children with limited English. These students were viewed as deficient in English instead of proficient in another language. Another major alteration of the bill was the initiative to discontinue the development of the student's native language and to concentrate on teaching English. The idea that ethnic minorities with different languages and cultural experiences could benefit American schools seemed to fade (Lyons, 1990).

In 1974, the United States Supreme Court found a San Francisco school district had failed to provide adequate English instruction to nearly 3,000 Chinese students. This landmark case, *Lau v. Nichols*, brought about further amendments in 1974 and 1978. In the 1980's there was political controversy regarding the instruction to students in their native language. Many politicians felt instruction should not promote student's native language, but concentrate on English only in order to help the students improve academically while learning English. During the Reagan administration the Bilingual Education Act received a \$23 million cut in its program while at the same time the number of students with limited English continued to increase. The Secretary of Education, T.H. Bell, permitted school districts to use any type of successful education

program to teach students English. Compliance standards became flexible, permissive and less costly by altering proposed regulations (Lyons, 1990).

The Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and Secondary School Improvement Amendments of 1988 brought a renewed opportunity for children that were identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP). It also provided school social workers a chance to improve the educational opportunities for at-risk children with language or economic difficulties (Curiel, 1990). School social workers were able to broaden their role with ELL students and their families.

The Role of the School Social Worker

As the law expanded the role of the school social worker it became apparent that the role also needed further definition. A number of studies and extensive literature have further clarified and defined the role of the school social worker (Alderson & Krishef, 1973; Chavkin, 1985; Lambert & Mullaly, 1982; Lee, 1987; Meares, 1977; Staudt, 1991; Timberlake, Sabatino, & Hopper, 1982). Jane Culbert, a pioneer of visiting teachers, defined the original role in 1916 as interpreting the student's family and community life to add to the teacher's ability to better teach the whole child (Allen-Meares, 1996). A more current definition has evolved which states that the main function of a school social worker is to help the school become a "responsive and stimulating" learning environment for different pupil groups. All disciplines in the school, social workers included, have the common goal of preparing children for healthy functioning in society and success in school. History has shown that school social workers need to be flexible and willing to take on new roles as the needs of society, schools, students and their families change (Allen-Meares, 1996).

It is beneficial for the social work profession to continuously assess and evaluate its role in the school. The school continues to change as it tries to meet the needs of the students it serves. However, is it prepared to provide culturally sensitive programs and help with the language barriers that students and their families face (Allen-Meares, 1996)? This is also reflected in the research question for this study: what is the role of school social workers in respect to English Language Learner (ELL) students in suburban elementary schools?

The following four social work roles of advocate, group facilitator, liaison, and counselor are common, but not inclusive to the profession. The following research focuses on each of these four roles, which were frequently found in the literature (Allen-Meares, 1996; Congress & Lynn, 1994, Grant & Haynes, 1995, Pryor, 1992; Spencer, 1998; Staudt, 1991; Vayle, 1992). The literature reviewed demonstrates each role in a school social workers practice with ELL students.

Advocate. A social worker can advocate for a client or a group that is disadvantaged in some way, by speaking on their behalf or representing them (Pincus & Minahan, 1973). As an advocate, the school social worker takes the opportunity to educate others in order to benefit their client's situation. In an advocacy role, the school social worker can provide information to students and staff on cultural issues and use their own practice skills to help schools work effectively with new immigrants (Pryor, 1992). The school social worker can also empower the clients to advocate for themselves.

One way for school social workers to advocate for ELL students in elementary schools is through multicultural education. Social workers, teachers and other school

personnel need to educate themselves about the needs of immigrant students.

Multicultural education includes learning about racial and ethnic differences, gender issues, age, socioeconomic status, and physical disabilities. Its purpose is to create a sense of understanding and respect for differences in people and give students the same accurate information (Spencer, 1998). The potential of social workers in assisting schools with multicultural education has had minimal recognition in school systems where their skills could help students and the school cope with diversity (Leckrone, 1993). The increase in cultural diversity continues to provide school social workers with the opportunity for helping students and school personnel adjust successfully to a multicultural environment.

A way of implementing multicultural education for an elementary school is through a cross-cultural training program. The cultural training coincides with the student's developmental stages, such as early school age, middle school age, and early adolescence (Grant & Haynes, 1995). Elementary schools have younger students who are at an optimal age to learn about the importance of diversity before negative judgements can be made (Freeman, 1995). The training also takes into consideration the demographic characteristics of the school. For example, a school social worker in an inner city may share different cultural information with students than a school social worker in a rural setting (Grant & Haynes, 1995). Some cross-cultural education approaches may be to include heroes, holidays and other cultural content to enhance curriculum as well as implement strategies to improve academic achievement that are aimed at students of poverty and other minority and ethnic groups. Providing opportunities for students to develop more positive connections with other races, gender

and cultural groups is also a goal of the cross-cultural training. The school social worker advocates for strategies within the family, school, and community that reinforces the cultural training the students have learned (Grant & Haynes, 1995).

Group Facilitator. A second role of a school social worker is to facilitate group work. Group work has been done with immigrant families since the beginning of the social work field. The social work profession was developed with the goal of assisting immigrants with assimilation and adjustment to the culture. In 1906 “visiting teachers” used group work to link immigrant families with the school. The school was the main institution used for teaching English and knowledge of successful social functioning in American society (Pryor, 1992). Group work helped people adjust and acclimate to new social environments as seen in the settlement house experiences (Hull House). At that time group work was seen as an effective way to address specific needs of immigrant children in their adjustment to a new culture.

In a recent study one elementary school used group work as their primary method in helping immigrant students with their transition to life in the United States (Congress & Lynn, 1994). Elementary school social workers may facilitate grief, life change, friendship or groups that focus on substance abuse in family members. By using a multicultural perspective the school social worker could expand group work to specifically include immigrant or ELL students and their families. The idea for a group begins with the identification of an unmet need, which may be met by forming a group. The development of a group that specifically supports immigrants or ELL students can have an important impact on the school and family systems. A study regarding role

perception of the school social worker revealed that group work was one of the services wanted more frequently by teachers and principals (Staudt, 1991).

The following is an example of how one school social worker used group work with immigrant mothers to rebuild their self-esteem which empowered them to advocate for themselves and their children (Vayle, 1992). A school social worker in a Boston suburb that represented thirty-two cultures and 322 ELL or bilingual students, started a support group for immigrant mothers. School staff noticed that immigrant women were frequently lonely and socially isolated at home, as their husbands joined the work force and their children started school. Difficulty speaking English often put their children in the role of interpreter and liaison between the parents and community. Immigrant women can feel a lack of self-esteem, which adds to their feeling of loneliness and depression. As they feel a loss of identity, they become less effective in their role in the family. The changes in family structure and boundaries can lead to a decline in the student's academic performance and behaviors. After the need for the group was established, members for the International Women's Group were recruited through school newsletters, adult ELL classes, referrals, cable television, and personal invitation. The goal of the group was to offer friendships and support to newly immigrated women with school age children. Sharing experiences, having guest speakers and a personal commitment helped form a group bond, which made it successful and effective. It was beneficial that all of the women in the group knew some English. Language can be the main barrier between immigrant families and schools. The success of the group was empowering for the immigrant women and for the school staff since it improved

communication between both of them. This also has a positive effect on the student (Vayle, 1992).

Liaison. The third school social work role included in this study is that of liaison. In the past this role focused on student groups and school personnel. Today, it is primarily carried out in two ways; through coordination and collaboration with school and community resources and by building a partnership between home and school.

As a liaison, school social workers can be an important link to community resources for ELL students and their families. Children are often the first ones introduced to language and culture adjustments in immigrant families. The school is usually the place where acculturation has occurred for them (Crocco, Brooks & Woo, 1998). Finding one's way through a fragmented system can be even more difficult for new immigrant families who speak little English. The school is an ideal setting for immigrant students and their families to find support and community resources. The social worker has the opportunity and challenge to provide it to them (Chang, 1993). Community resources can vary depending on demographics and population needs. Services may be available that are specific to a culture.

One way this is demonstrated is through school-linked services. The advantages of these services are frequently highlighted in school social work literature as resulting in a decrease in absenteeism and increasing academic achievement (Delgado, 1998). Successful collaboration with school and community services help to serve the whole child and their family with the various problems they may face (Zetlin, Ramos, Valdez, 1996).

An example of school linked services is found in the following study that included Puerto Rican parents with children in a Boston elementary school bilingual program. Participants were asked how schools, support systems, and community agencies could improve collaboration to better educate children (Delgado, 1998). Parents were interviewed four times over a two-year period. Study findings showed that families had numerous social and health needs that were unmet. Families lacked support systems and involvement with community agencies, from both Latino and non-Latino providers, was limited. Frustration was often expressed with the difficulty in obtaining various services and further complicated by inaccessibility to transportation. All parents in the study identified their child's elementary school as a main community resource for their family and often times a part of their natural support system. Respondents reported school personnel helping with various needs such as explaining government forms, clothing needs, job referrals, and school involvement (Delgado, 1998). This study shows how school social workers can use their role as liaison to initiate school-linked services and to recognize that immigrant families may need additional intervention in acquiring community services due to their hesitancy in obtaining help and other cultural and language barriers.

The second way to carry out the role of liaison for ELL students in elementary schools is by building the partnership between home and school. School social workers have established their role between home and school by extensive work with parents (Nelson, 1990; Staudt & Powell, 1996). Many social workers would like to spend more time in the school-home liaison role. The school and home environment share the responsibility of a child's success at school. Schools can promote achievement by

involving parents and offering resources to enhance their child's education. School social workers are in a position to empower parents to take part in their children's educational development. Knowledge in communications, families, the ecological perspective and cultural diversity provides school social workers with the assets needed to support parents in a school partnership (Bowen, 1999).

One way a school social worker can improve the partnership between home and school is to be aware of their support network. As a liaison, or link to the student's family, a school social worker should be able to identify the immigrant student's support system. A broader sense of family is part of some cultures and can help determine who assists the child with homework. This helper can often times be someone other than a parent, often a part of his or her extended family such as a sibling, friend or relative, especially if there is a language barrier. Social workers have an opportunity to assess these natural support systems and try to implement them into the student's education.

Another way for the school social worker to build a partnership with a student's home is to acknowledge that immigrant parents may be unprepared or uninformed of a partnership role with the school. Immigrant populations may lack experience with forming a partnership with the school to provide their child a better chance of academic success. New ethnic groups, such as Asians and Latin Americans have strong family support, but may not have the experience of working with schools on a partnership basis (Constable, 1992).

Multiethnic collaboration between family, school, and community can provide children with a better opportunity for education (Chavkin & Brown, 1992). The literature reviewed frequently cites the importance of collaboration in the public school

setting. Partnership, collaboration, and a community resource link are ideal ways for the school social worker to carry out the role of liaison for ELL students in elementary schools.

Counseling and Intervention. A fourth school social work role is counselor. Students with behavioral or academic problems are a concern for educators. Their cultural and language differences puts them at further risk for difficulties at home and at school. School social workers are aware of the influence that family problems can have on a child's functioning at school. Often times school social workers are limited in their involvement with families and are unable to provide the longer term therapy that some families need and must refer them to outside agencies (Freeman et al., 1998). School social workers respond more frequently to crisis intervention, a situation that demands immediate short term help, with students, families, and the school (Allen-Meares et al., 1996).

Immigrant families can be involved in culturally conflicting situations with schools and need assistance with interpretation and mediation (Allen-Meares et al., 1996). A school social worker can provide interventions to help immigrant or ELL students cope with the transition from their native country to life in the United States. These students can experience numerous personal and family stress in addition to school stressors, which puts them at high risk for developing behavioral symptoms. In many cases, immigrant children experience poverty, lack of supervision due to both parents working long hours, the responsibility of caring for younger siblings, single-parent families, limited English and personal trauma. They may struggle with feelings of loss, isolation, aggression, anxiety and other behavior problems. Some children may act out

in the classroom and others may become isolated and withdrawn (Congress & Lynn, 1994). Teachers and staff can feel overwhelmed by their limitations in being able to teach immigrant children who are burdened with the consequences of suffering, deprivation, and stress (Haines, 1989; Trueba, Jacobs & Kirton, 1990).

The impact of war and extreme violence on a child is influenced by the severity of the trauma, their age, and the support available (Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture, 1996). The psychological effects of trauma on a young person are extensive and can affect their feelings, relationships, ability to learn, moral development and adjustment to life in adulthood. Their trust in others is frequently destroyed and guilt and shame can persist for years following severe trauma. Anxiety, helplessness and loss of control can often be seen in children who have experienced trauma from war. When a child experiences intense anxiety it is common for them to “relive” their fears with greater intensity. Anxiety can cause feelings of irritability and frustration, which can be displayed with compulsive and aggressive behaviors. Increased anxiety can cause a student to have a low threshold for reacting to stimuli. Symptoms can be nervousness, jumpy, inability to concentrate, preoccupied with danger and an exaggerated startle response. Teachers may observe this when a student jumps at a loud noise, like a school bell or hides at the sound of a siren. Some children may experience less severe anxiety reactions, such as psychosomatic symptoms like stomachaches and headaches (Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture, 1996).

Teachers, social workers, and other school staff can implement strategies to work more effectively with immigrant children. Social workers need to build rapport and trusting relationship with ELL students, which can be challenging when working with

children that have experienced such trauma. To remain objective and project empathy is an essential skill in the social work practice (Shulman, 1992). Learning a few words in different languages to share with ELL students is helpful. Collaborating with the student's ELL teacher can also assist with adjustment issues (Hickey, 1998). This seems to be an obvious intervention, but one that is easily overlooked. Changing or adjusting practices or instructions to make it easier for the immigrant student to understand can minimize frustration in learning. Finding out about the student's family support system and their cultural background can help bridge the gap from home to school (Hickey, 1998).

As experts in individual and family behavior, school social workers can assist colleagues in assessing an ELL student's source of stress that could prevent them from achieving home and school expectations. Cultural, language and environmental issues should be considered as reasons for an ELL student's behavioral and academic performance. Bilingual education can facilitate the student's academic progression and minimize the confusion encountered when attending an all English speaking school. It can also provide the social worker with an awareness of the needs of an ELL student (Curiel, 1990).

Gaps in the Literature

There were two distinct gaps found in this literature review. The first is the lack of empirical studies regarding ELL students and their social service needs. Much of the literature reviewed lacked empirical evidence of effectiveness with immigrant students (Bowen, 1999; Congress & Lynn, 1994; Delgado, 1998; Grant & Haynes, 1995; Pryor, 1992; Vayle, 1992). Articles pertaining to immigrants and bilingual programs were also

found in the research (Crocco et al., 1998; Gersten, 1996; Hickey, 1998; Rosenberg, 1991).

The second gap is that in the studies that were done, they applied a specific intervention to a specific population. For example, identifying natural support systems with Puerto Rican students (Delgado, 1998); evaluating collaboration of school-linked services for Puerto Rican families (Delgado, 1998); assessment of school-family partnership (Bowen, 1999); evaluation of a home-school partnership with a Haitian population (Bronstein & Kelly, 1998). One well known study cited occasionally in some of the literature reviewed was the survey conducted by Mintzies and Hare (1985), which became a NASW report titled, *The Human Factor: A Key to Excellence in Education*. It offers extensive and beneficial information, although it has become outdated and provides those in education an excellent opportunity for future research.

The role of the school social worker has been studied extensively, however research that applies those roles specifically to ELL students was not found. The literature reviewed frequently researches specific social work functions and perspectives, but is limited in applying major social work roles to ELL students. This study attempts to fill these gaps by investigating what role social workers are using with ELL students and their families. The research also tries to address the issue of changes in the school social worker's role with the increase of immigrant students. The study specifically includes suburban elementary schools where immigration growth has been more recent. This research also attempts to target the ELL population in schools and includes the importance of language for immigrants. Further studies may include what school interventions were most effective with ELL students and their families as they

adjusted to a new school and culture. The purpose of this literature review was to enhance the awareness of school social workers as they use the roles of advocate, group facilitator, liaison and counselor with ELL students and their families. As the immigrant population expands to suburban schools, social workers can further shape their role with ELL students and their families during this time of transition.

Conclusion

The need for school social workers to be culturally sensitive to new immigrants and to advocate for them as they adjust to a new life in the United States is greater than ever before. Social workers are needed to form a bridge between immigrant students, families and schools. In this literature review immigration statistics and a history of education policies affecting immigrant students have been included to provide a better grasp of the potential, challenge and need in working with this population. The roles of a school social worker and how they relate to an ELL student have also been identified. The implementation of a multicultural perspective is essential in working with immigrant students. These areas have been highlighted in order to answer the research question, “What is the role of the school social worker in respect to English Language Learner students in suburban elementary schools?” Through the ELL program, school social workers can enhance their role with students while at the same time improving the life of an immigrant child. With the roles of advocacy, liaison, group facilitator and counselor a school social worker can help ELL students and immigrant children achieve a better tomorrow in their new country, the United States of America.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

This chapter includes the research question, describes the research design, and defines the concepts and study population. This section also discusses measurement issues, data collection, and analysis procedures and explains how study participants were protected as subjects.

Research Question

The research question for this study is: What is the role of the school social worker in respect to English Language Learner students in suburban elementary schools? The study focuses on the roles of advocate, group facilitator, liaison and counselor and applies those roles to social work practice with ELL students and their families.

As reflected in the introduction and the literature review, the role of the school social worker has been influenced with the increase of ELL students in elementary schools. The role of the social worker is further expanded by the needs of non-English speaking immigrant students, school staff, and the community. School social workers may enhance the education of the ELL student by assisting them and their family members with the adjustment to a new culture.

Research Design

This descriptive study involved quantitative data obtained from a questionnaire. It also integrated qualitative data by asking open-ended questions and providing an opportunity for further comments. This study used the deductive theory and is exploratory in purpose. The intention was to explore the topic of the role of a school social worker with ELL students as shown in the focus of the research question.

Immigration of non-English speaking students to elementary schools is a fairly recent phenomenon, especially with increases being over a short amount of time. Its impact on schools and social workers can be further researched to offer continued insight on this topic.

Concepts

The concepts of the study include the role of the school social worker specifically with elementary ELL students such as school demographics, professional training, community resources, and collaboration. The social worker has an opportunity in a school setting to work with this target population by assisting ELL students and their families with the adjustments to a new culture and language.

The role of the social worker has been researched extensively. The literature frequently included advocate, group work, liaison, and counselor as roles of a school social worker (Allen-Meares, 1994; Bowen, 1999; Franklin & Allen-Meares, 1997).

The following are definitions of these roles:

Advocate – a social worker serves as a advocate by promoting support, services, opportunities and choices to disadvantaged or discriminated people (NASW, 1993).

Group work – group work is seen as a method for members to support one another, develop positive relationships and learn to use additional coping skills (Northen, 1976).

Working with people in a group that is focused on similar issues can help individuals adjust to new social environments or situations (Congress & Lynn, 1994).

Liaison – the school social worker provides a link to resources for students and their families. Partnership and collaboration can also represent this role.

Counselor - school social workers provide counseling to individuals or groups. It can include assessment, intervention, strategies, educating, providing information and guidance with student and family problems.

Nominal definitions of additional variables in the study to be measured are:

Cultural awareness: The need for individuals to be sensitive to different languages, customs, and lifestyles of new immigrants and to assist in the adjustment to life in their new culture (Congress & Lynn, 1994).

English Language Learner (ELL) classes: Services provided in the public schools where immigrant students with a native language receive additional teaching to become more proficient in English, while mastering subject matter skills (Curiel, 1990).

Study population

The study population will include three school districts in the northwest suburban area of the Minneapolis and St. Paul metropolitan area. The three school districts will be referred to as district #1, #2, and #3. The units of analysis will be the individuals that are elementary school social workers in these three school districts.

District #1 consists of 20 elementary schools, four junior high schools, and three senior high schools. It is one of the larger school districts in the state and provides education for over 35,000 students and employs about 5,000 people. The district has 15 elementary school social workers. There are 627 ELL students in the district, attending 13 different school sites.

District #2 is the third largest in the state. It includes 27 elementary schools, two kindergarten centers, seven junior high schools, and four senior high schools. It also has five community-based sites for alternative learning. The student enrollment is 41,088.

There are approximately 6,000 employees of which 17 are elementary school social workers. This district has 900 ELL students (K-12) that attend school at 11 different sites. An additional site is being added in the fall.

District #3 is smaller and consists of seven elementary schools, three middle schools, and one senior high. There is no alternative school. There are a total of 9,092 students and approximately 1,200 employees in this district. This district has 6 elementary school social workers. There are 90 ELL students (K-12). This district does not have ELL sites; instead staff instructs students at their regular boundary attendance school.

Approval from the school districts to conduct the study was given (see Appendices A, B, and C) and a list of elementary school social workers was obtained from the special education departments at each of the district offices. A consent form (see Appendix D) and the survey (see Appendix E) were distributed by mail on March 3, 2000. A reminder letter (see Appendix F) was sent on March 10, 2000. The return date for questionnaires and close of the study was March 20, 2000. The total sample size consisted of 38 elementary school social workers from the three participating school districts.

Measurement Issues

The following discusses steps taken by the researcher to minimize measurement error and increase the validity of the survey. Systemic error is one measurement issue that may occur in this survey. Social desirability bias, where participants want to show themselves in a good light is an example (Rubbin & Babbes, 1997). School social workers may respond to questions in the survey more positively

than what reflects their actual practice. A written statement on the questionnaire encouraged accurate answers to help decrease this form of error. Establishing confidentiality and anonymity are additional ways to decrease error.

Cultural biases should be a minimal error in this survey. Most of the participants are of the same culture, speak the same language and have a college degree in social work or a related field. It was also important to choose the wording of survey questions and responses carefully. Phrasing questions in unbiased wording also decreased the systemic error.

Random error was minimized by keeping the survey short and allowing enough time to complete it so participants didn't feel hurried in completing their answers. Social work jargon was avoided in order for all participants to have a mutual understanding of the questions. Additional ways to minimize error was to have the survey reviewed by two colleagues that are school social workers. This provided an opportunity for feedback to detect vagueness and increase the validity of the survey. The questions in the survey should be relevant to all of the social workers. The face validity was determined by subjective assessments made during a field experience at an elementary school.

The levels of measurement used in the survey are nominal, ordinal and ratio. The survey will include background information (nominal); degrees of satisfaction and importance (ordinal), and measurements starting with zero (ratio). Continuous variables were also in the background information pertaining to length of experience and demographics such as student enrollment. Discrete variables were included in questions involving cultural education, barriers, and collaboration.

Instrument Design

The research questionnaire included 22 questions pertaining to the role of the school social work with ELL students. Thirty-eight elementary school social workers from three districts had the opportunity to participate in the survey. The survey included questions that pertain to the social work roles of advocate, liaison, group facilitator, and counselor. Open-ended questions and an opportunity for comments also provided qualitative data. A Rensis Likert scale was used to measure frequency of communication with other school staff. The questionnaire was pre-tested by two colleagues that are not participating in the study. The survey purpose was explained in the cover letter and included with the questionnaire when it was distributed by mail.

Data Analysis

Returned surveys were identified according to school district. The data collected was reviewed and compared to the other two districts and also combined together to represent the sample population of elementary school social workers in northwest suburban school districts. Excel was used for statistical software. Statistical analysis examined the frequency of the variables. Graphic representation of the data shows the frequency distribution. A Rensis Likert scale was used to measure the operational variable frequency of collaboration with school staff. A pre-coding system of one to five was used to give each variable value, with one being the least valuable or beneficial and five representing the most value or benefit.

Protection of Human Subjects

To best protect the human subjects involved in the study, ethical issues were reviewed. Approval from the school districts was obtained prior to the study.

Participants did not identify themselves and were given the option to not participate in the survey. To increase anonymity the names of the elementary schools were not disclosed. Participants were informed that the research information would be shared with district administration. Names of the participants will remain anonymous. The three participating school districts are not referred to by name, but as district #1, #2 and #3.

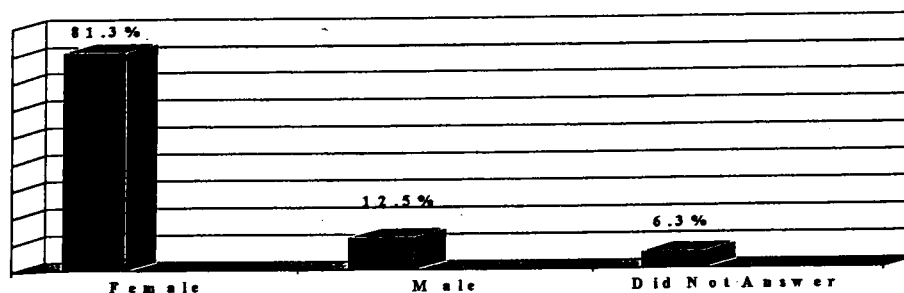
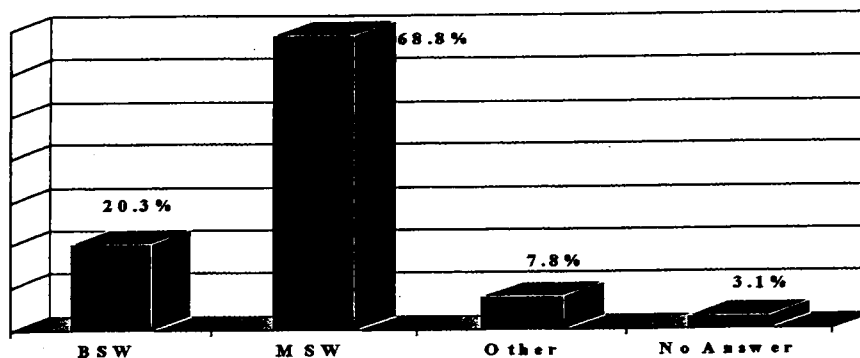
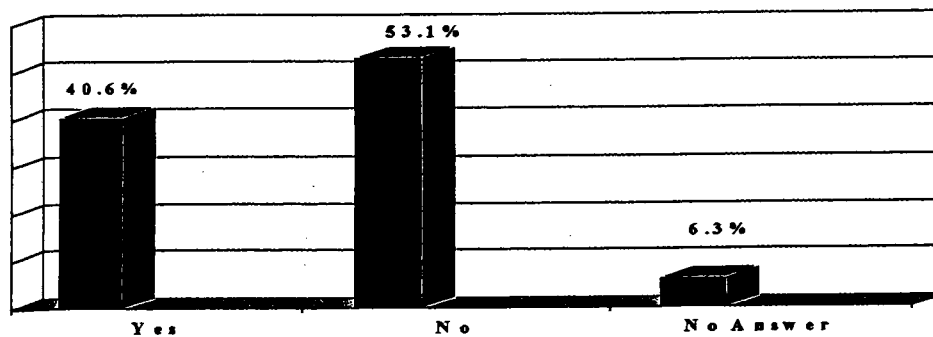
CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

This chapter presents the results of the study. Its purpose is to describe and analyze the data collected, in order to answer the research question: What is the role of the school social worker in respect to English Language Learner students in suburban elementary schools? The chapter begins with a description of the characteristics of the sample population. Then it reports on the findings of specific tasks or functions that school social workers do in their practice with an ELL population. These functions are reflected in the four school social work roles of advocate, group facilitator, liaison and counselor that were researched in the literature review. The chapter concludes with the findings from the research, in which school social workers describe their role with ELL students and their families.

Characteristics of the Sample Population

Thirty-eight questionnaires were distributed by mail and 32 were returned for a response rate of 84%. All three of the participating school districts were represented in the findings. One of the questionnaires was not completed due to the school social worker being new to the position and reported an inability to adequately answer the questions. This was considered missing data.

The following findings describe the gender, education, employment at another school (see tables 1,2 and 3), experience and training of the participants. From the 32 questionnaires returned, 26 female and four male social workers completed questionnaires. Two did not respond to this question. Twenty-two of the study participants had a Master's of Social Work degree, seven held a Bachelor's degree, two responded with "other" and one had no answer. Experience in school social work

Table 1**Respondent Gender**Table 2**What educational degree do you hold?**Table 3**Are you a social worker in another school?**

ranged from one to 24 years, with the average amount of experience being 10 years. Thirteen school social workers also worked at another elementary school, while 17 worked at only one school. Two did not respond to this question.

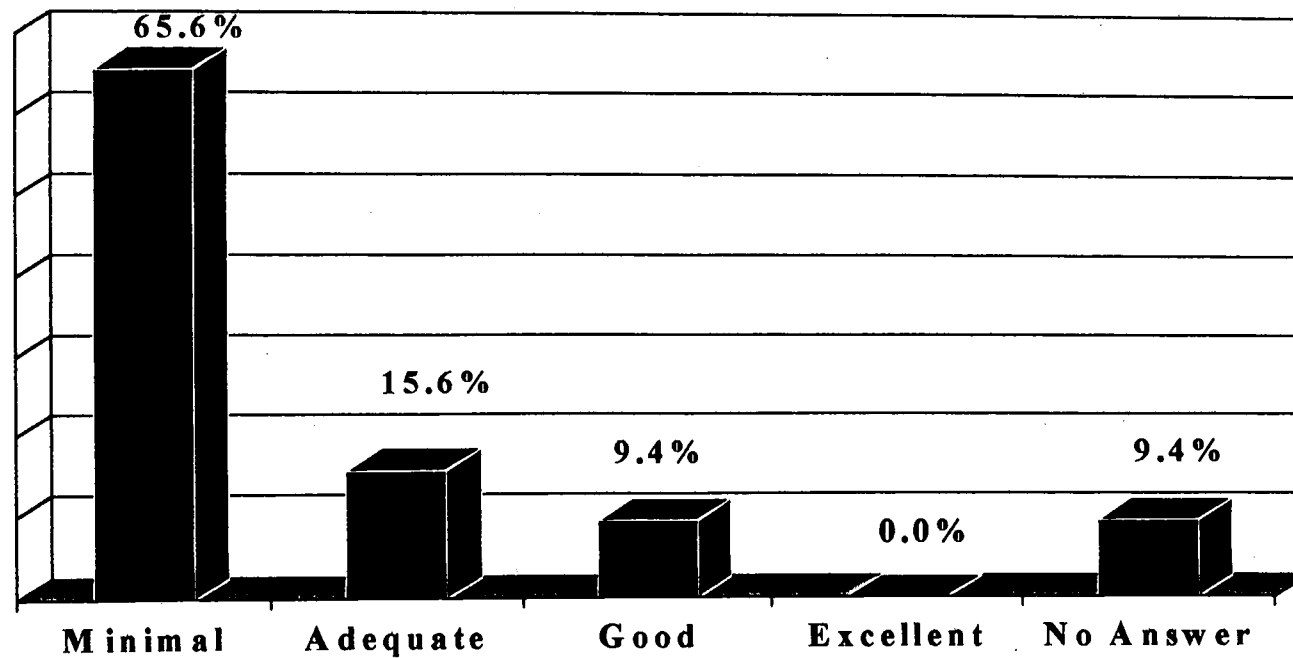
Staff education in ELL issues. The majority of participants, 65% (n=21), reflected limited training in ELL issues (see table 4). Twenty-one of the school social workers considered their training in ELL issues as “minimal,” 5 reported “adequate” training, and three had no answer. None reported their training as being “excellent” and only 9% (n=3) assessed it as being “good.” Twenty-one of the 32 respondents made no comments regarding their ELL training.

Three out of the 11 social workers that did comment stated that personal experiences were the most helpful in their training. One participant stated, “I received no formal training specific to ELL students, but my undergraduate degree is in cross-cultural studies and I am a Spanish speaker. [I] have a lot of training and experience working with new immigrant communities.” Another school social worker commented that working in Austin, Texas in a school with many ELL students was [her] most beneficial training.

Five respondents felt workshops from various immigrant services were helpful education resources. The Center for Victims of Torture was a resource mentioned by three participants. One school social worker stated, “Most of my training has been independently pursued by me, such as [attending] workshops at the Center for Victims of Torture.” Three school social workers reported teachers and families as also being helpful in gaining cultural knowledge about ELL students. Two out of the 32 participants responded that they had no training.

Table 4

How would you describe your ELL training?



Characteristics of the Elementary Schools

The findings that follow pertain to the elementary schools represented by the survey respondents. Twenty-six of the social workers worked at schools that had student enrollments ranging from 300-899 (see Table 5). Five respondents reported an enrollment of 900 or more students. None of the social workers were at schools that had less than 300 students.

Nineteen of the participants were at schools that were not ELL sites, which is a designated school in the district that provides ELL classes. Ten social workers in the study worked at elementary schools that were an ELL site. Three respondents did not answer this question. Eleven schools were represented as having four or less ELL students, although five schools had 45-49 ELL students (see Table 6).

Family liaison. Nearly 72% (n=23) of the social workers in the study did not have a family liaison position at their school. A school liaison can assist families with enrollment forms, community resources and planned school/family events. This position is more typical of schools with an at-risk population, such as low-income, minority and single-parent students. Seven school social workers had a family liaison position at their school. Five of the school social workers felt this position was helpful and four responded that it was not helpful to them when working with ELL students. One participant commented, "Our family liaison can connect us with additional support networks and funds if need arises for any families at our school." Another social worker seemed to imply that another position might be more helpful when she stated, "I feel it would be helpful to have interpreters available for conferences, special meetings, etc."

Table 5

What is your school's enrollment?

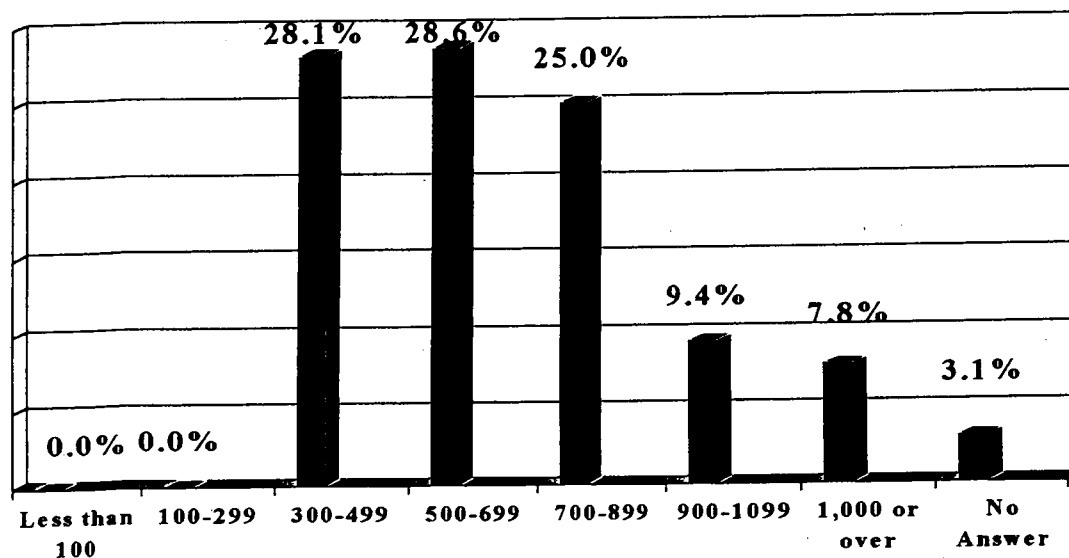
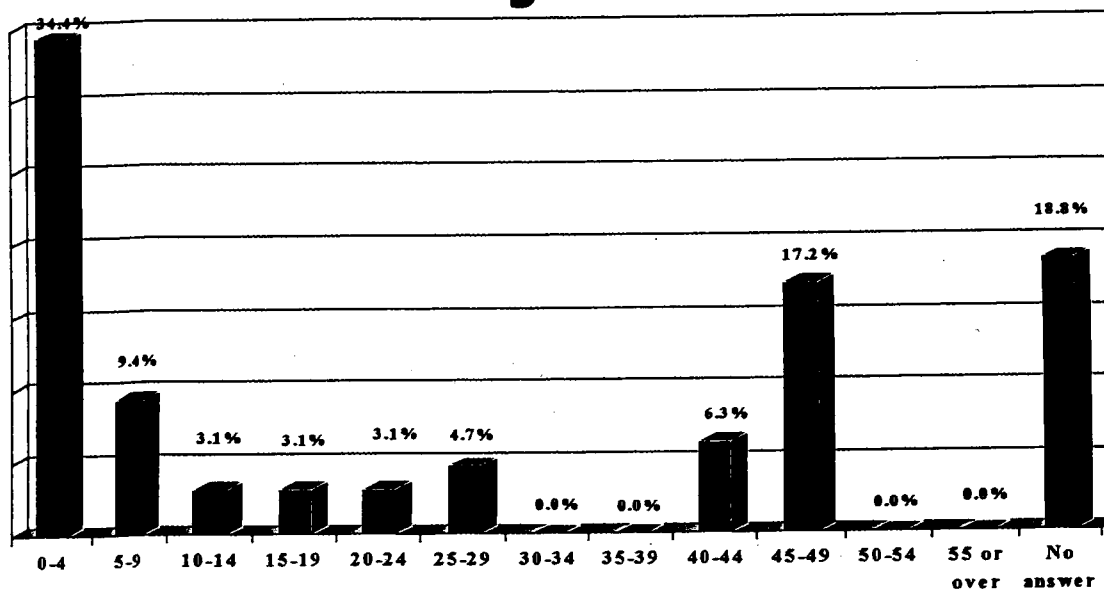


Table 6

How many ELL students are enrolled in your school?



School Social Work Roles

The role of the school social worker was researched and four roles seemed to be most common in the literature reviewed. The roles of advocate, group facilitator, liaison and counselor were applied to functions of a school social worker with ELL students, family members and school staff.

Advocacy Role

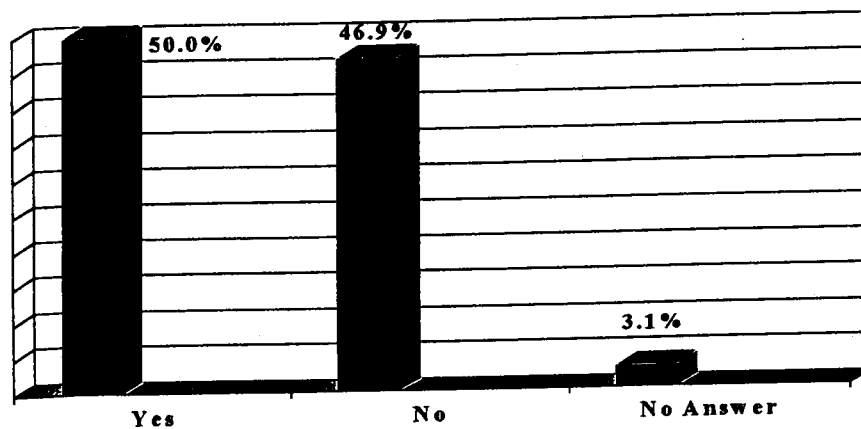
The next section analyzes the findings from the questionnaire that reflect an advocacy role that school social workers may have when working with ELL students and their families. Functions included in this section are obtaining interpretive services, using a different language, providing multicultural education, assessing for special education services and including cultural information in developmental histories.

Language barriers. The use of interpreter services was nearly equal. Seventeen had used interpreter services ranging from one to six times and fourteen of the respondents had never used an interpreter during the past two school years. The number of school social workers familiar with the "Language Line," an AT&T interpretive service with access to over 140 different languages, was also close to equal. Fifty percent (n=16) were aware of the Language Line, while nearly 47% (n=15) were not (see Table 7). Sixteen did not respond, ten had not used it at all and six social workers had actually used the Language Line at least one to three times.

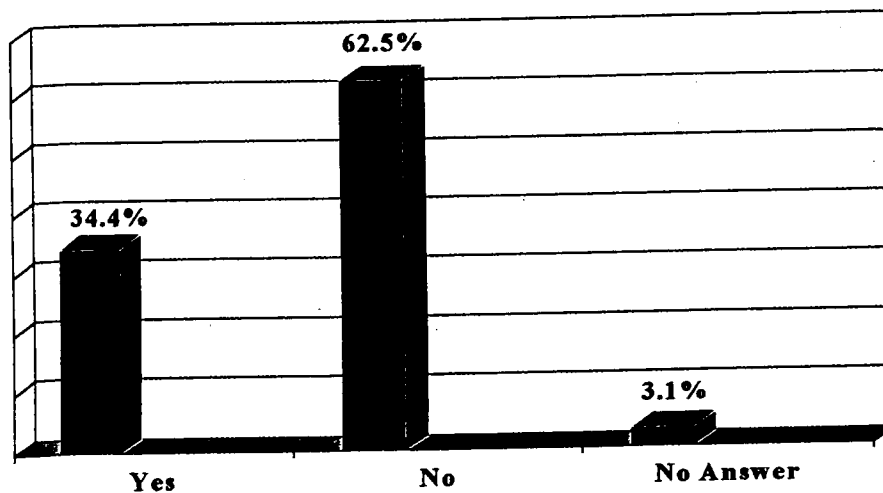
Twenty participants reported no knowledge of a second language and eleven of the respondents reported knowing another language (see Table 8). The most common language known other than English was Spanish (n=5). Other languages known by the school social workers were French (n=3), German (n=2), and Hebrew (n=1).

Table 7

Are you familiar with the Language Line?

Table 8

Do you know another language?



Nineteen of the participants did not respond to the question regarding the benefit of knowing another language. Seven felt that knowing another language was beneficial in their work with ELL students and six social workers reported that it would not be helpful. Out of the 32 respondents, 14 did not respond, eleven were interested in learning another language, and seven were not. The language most school social workers wanted to learn was Spanish (n=9). Other language interests were improving Spanish (n=2), and Spanish and Russian (n=2).

Multicultural education. There were 22 participants that responded when school social workers were asked about what they have done to provide education for staff and increase cultural awareness in their school. Their responses were divided into categories and totaled (see Table 9 below).

Table 9 **Multicultural Education**

<u>Interventions</u>	<u>Responses</u>
Share cultural information with staff	11
None or minimal	10
Inservice, workshop for staff	6
All-school program	5
Diversity Committee	4
Classroom presentation	3
Discussion with teachers	3

Note: Some respondents answered more than once so total may be greater than 32.

Eleven of the participants reported educating staff by sharing information from workshops and seminars with teachers and other school staff. One school social worker wrote, "...got a speaker for staff training regarding Southeast Asians." Another reported, "...I've met with teachers to discuss cultural impact in classrooms." Ten of the participants represent the category of none or minimal intervention with multicultural education. Six of the participants did not respond to the question, two reported that they did nothing and two more stated that their role was minimal. When asked about multicultural education for students and staff the following two comments were represented in the table as none or minimal. One social worker commented, "That has fallen on the ELL teacher. I do go into every classroom in the fall and talk about all types of harassment but nothing with students or staff." Another social worker stated, "Nothing. People coming to our country need to understand our culture, not the other way around. Duh!" Five of the participants commented on specific events or programs that they had organized to increase cultural education. One social worker explained, "I organized all-school assembly programs and shared information, pictures and articles from a trip to Ghana." Another respondent wrote, "... we will be hosting a multicultural week in April." A third social worker stated, "I arranged a Bosnia Parent Night." Another social worker explained, "I've had 'SHADES,' a group from a YMCA, where staff members come and teach children about other cultures. The multicultural team also does presentations in the fourth grade." One more participant stated she had, "...arranged a presentation from the Center for Victims of Torture..." Four of the school social workers stated they were on diversity or multicultural committees in their school.

Assessing for special education services. In frequency of assessing ELL students for special education services, nearly 72% (n=23) of school social workers responded with “rarely” or “never.” (see Table 10). In comparison, 25% (n=8) answered that ELL students were assessed for special education “frequently” or “occasionally.”

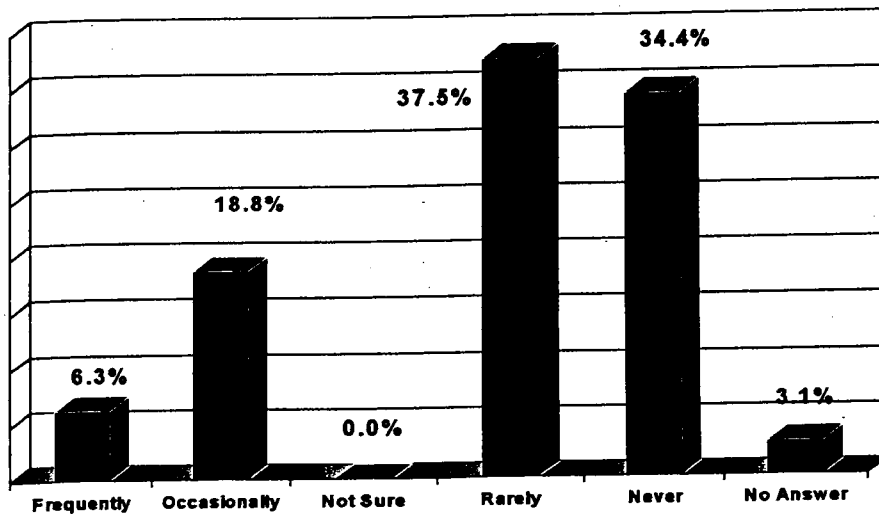
Seventeen of the respondents made no comment regarding this process, while 15 workers commented on the strengths and weaknesses of the special education assessments and provided more than one answer. The following results reflect comments on the weaknesses of the special education assessment process for ELL students.

Five participants commented on the additional need of a cultural assessment. One school social worker commented, “we don’t have accurate tools to assess students of minorities, let alone [those] from other countries.” Another comment was, “[We need a] cultural assessment as well as special education assessment.” A third social worker added, “...tests are bias.” Of the 15 comments made, four of them included a language barrier as a weakness. One participant remarked, “Language barriers - our school system does not have interpreters in the schools and it is expensive to just get them for educational or family concerns.”

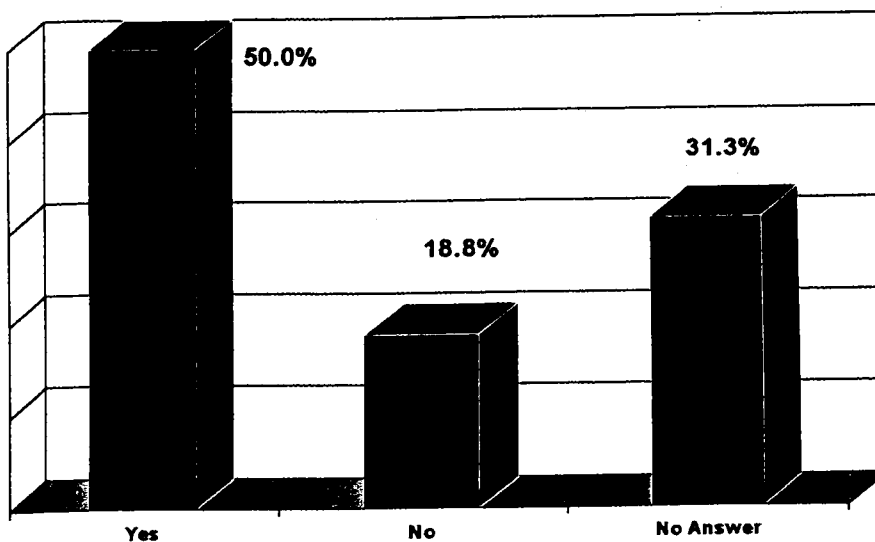
Four social workers reported that incorrect information and lack of family members were also a weakness in the special education assessment process of ELL students. One participant stated, “The family is not always honest with information due to ‘fears of the system’ and at times we are concerned if cultural issues are the problem.” A similar remark was, “...immigrants often have supplied incorrect information to have some advantage in this country.” Another participant commented, “Family [members] who knew the developmental history are often not available (example: parents who were

Table 10

How often do you assess ELL students for special education services?

Table 11

Do you include cultural information in an ELL student's developmental history?



killed in war.)” In addition, a social worker stated, “...parents don’t have developmental information because a relative has raised them for sometimes long periods of time.”

Gaps in the ELL student’s education were also considered a weakness by one of the respondents. She explained, “it is difficult to tease out what are true learning disabilities and what is lack of exposure [or school attendance] for students. The lack of knowledge can look like a disability. Parents are frequently unaware of learning disabilities or concerns and do not understand how to use the systems here.” A participant also cited a lack of understanding from staff as a weakness. She commented, “A weakness is ELL staff who themselves do not understand [what] trauma kids have come from. An example is wanting to label a kid EBD (with Emotional and Behavioral Disability) who just came from a war torn country.” Another social worker stated that there are no strengths in this process and states that students need more than the school district supplies. One respondent reported that if a student qualifies for ELL services that they are not assessed for special education services and stated, “It seems to be either one or the other, but not both.”

Of the 15 school social workers that commented, six made positive comments regarding the assessment process and four of them included the increased learning and awareness that the diversity of ELL students provided them. One participant stated, “This process becomes difficult because we need to look at a wide variety of factors when we are attempting to determine if a student is handicapped. In the past we tended to avoid assessment (of ELL students). At this time I feel that our team does a pretty good job of assessment including consideration of cultural factors.” A third respondent stated, “...a strength is receptive staff [who are] willing to do what they can to work with

their children with language deficiencies." Another social worker wrote, "Strength: personal connection with family."

Cultural information in developmental histories. Developmental histories can be an excellent way to share pertinent information about a child and an ideal place to include cultural information. Fifty percent (n=16) of the school social workers in the study reported that they included cultural information in an ELL student's developmental history (see Table 11).

Twenty of the respondents had no comment regarding developmental histories. Twelve participants did share comments. Four participants stated the importance of the inclusion of culture in a developmental history. One school social worker reported developing a form that specifically includes cultural information. One school social worker wrote, "Parents are usually very helpful in providing information. For example, when students qualify for special education, parents usually indicate they were delayed in native language development or other skills. Or they may indicate the student has had limited experience in school. This information is crucial in our assessments." Another responded, "To me this is important in helping staff learn about and understand the child's cultural context." Another school social worker remarked, "This [the developmental history] can be difficult with language barriers and differences in cultural understanding of family."

Three stated that they did not do developmental histories. Three more participants responded that they had minimal or no ELL students in their school. Two social workers responded that they don't include cultural information in the developmental history, but thought they should. One participant responded, "...I don't, but I know I should."

Group Facilitator Role

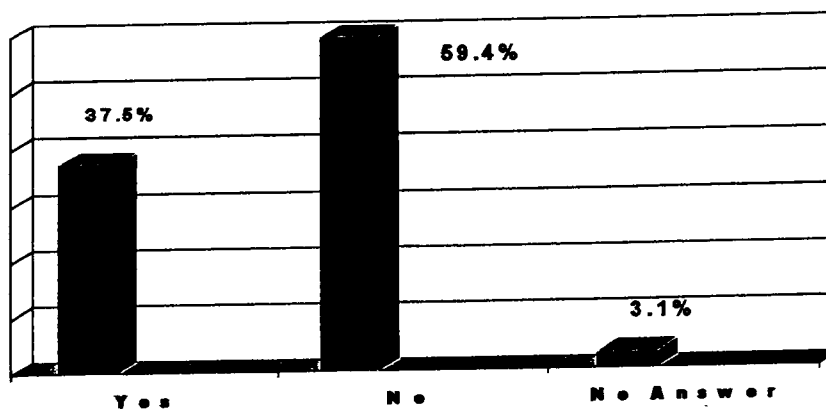
The next section asked school social workers about functions that reflect a group facilitator role with ELL students. The questionnaire asked participants if they did group work with ELL students or their families and if they would consider group work in the future. School social workers were also asked if they thought group work was beneficial and were given an opportunity to make comments.

Most of the respondents, (19 out of 32) did not do group work with ELL students and even more, 27 out of 32, did not do group work that included ELL family members (see Tables 12 and 13). Twenty-seven of the school social workers had no response when asked if group work was beneficial. Of the 32 participants, only seven responded with “yes” when asked if group work was beneficial.

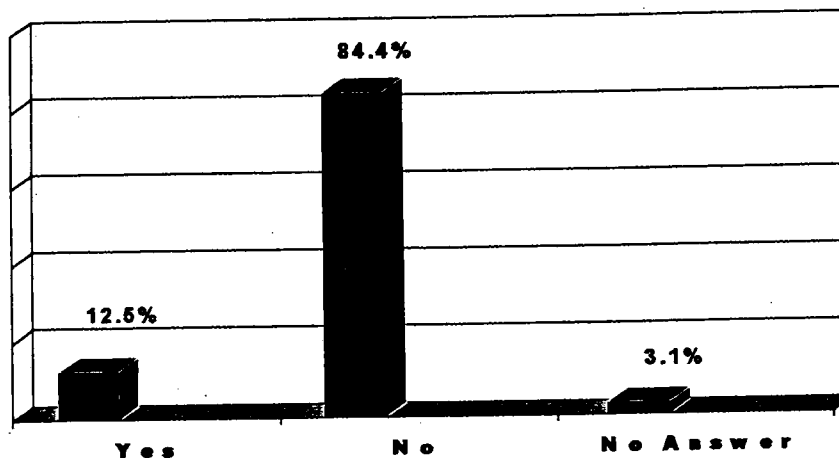
Seventeen of the participants did not respond to the question regarding implementing future group work. Twelve of the respondents would consider doing group work in the future and three responded with “no.” Of the six school social workers that added comments to this question, three responded with a concern for the lack of time to do group work with ELL students and their families. One participant commented, “this is a time intensive given the language and cultural learning that must concurrently be part of the learning.” A similar comment was, “we are a very needy school and I just have not had time to start ELL groups, but hope to when it slows down.” Two of the six participants with comments reported a lack of ELL students at their school and one stated, “I have had ELL students in groups, but they weren’t designed to address cultural differences.”

Table 12

Have you ever done group work with ELL students?

Table 13

Have you ever done group work with family members of an ELL students?



Liaison Role

The following section analyzes findings from the questionnaire that are functions school social workers may use in their role as a liaison. In their practice with ELL students and families school social workers may refer clients to cultural resources, identify support systems, collaborate with school staff and assist with obtaining academic and immunization records.

Cultural Community Resources. Twenty-three of the participants responded and often with more than one answer. Nine of the school social workers did not respond when asked, "What community resources specific to a culture have you referred clients to?" The data provided a number of different community resources used by school social workers with ELL students. Some responses were specific community resources and others were resource preferences. The following page includes a list of community resources and the number of times each was cited by study participants (see Table 14).

School social workers also identified preferred and general community resources that included; African American therapists ($n = 2$), Hennepin County social worker, who speaks a specific language ($n = 1$), community education ($n = 1$), religious supports ($n = 1$), and medical services with interpreters in the family's language ($n = 1$).

Table 14**Cultural Community Resources**

<u>Resource</u>	<u>Number of Responses</u>
Center for Victims of Torture	4
ESL Program in Anoka-Hennepin District	3
Pilot City	2
Al-Anon for Latinos	1
CEAP	1
Family Services	1
International Institute	1
Laos Family Resources (Vietnamese, Hmong)	1
Minneapolis Cultural Center	1
Somali Services	1
Southeast Asian Project	1
Spanish Speaking Counseling Center	1
Wilder Foundation	1

Note. Number of respondents = 23 Some respondents gave more than 1 answer.

Identifying support systems. When working with immigrant and ELL students additional consideration must be taken in finding out their support networks. School social workers were asked, "How do you identify an ELL student's support system?" To answer this question, most social workers (n = 9) reported talking with the family, student, teachers (classroom and ELL), family liaison and interpreters. Three participants

reported that they don't identify support systems of ELL students, as found in these comments from two participants, "I don't. The ELL teacher would probably know that and let me know if I needed it" and "I usually don't."

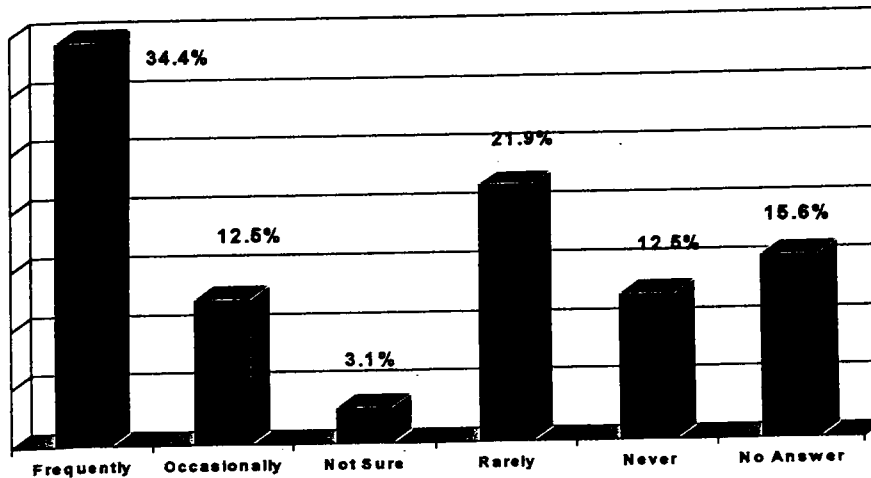
Frequency of collaboration with school staff. School social workers were asked about frequency of collaboration with the following school personnel; the ELL teacher, social worker at ELL site, classroom teacher and the special education teacher, regarding ELL students. Participants were able to rank their level of collaboration by answering "frequently," "occasionally," "not sure," "rarely," and "never" (see Appendix E). Thirty-four percent (n=11) of the school social workers collaborated "frequently" with the special education teacher. The classroom teacher also reflected a high degree of collaboration with 34% (n=11) of the participants reporting "occasionally" and 28% (n=9) responding with "frequent" collaboration. Collaboration with the ELL teacher was noticeably less often. Over fifty percent (n=16) of the participants described their collaboration with an ELL teacher as "rarely" or "never." Twenty-eight percent of the participants (n=9) answered with "never." Only 15% (n=5) of the participants responding with "frequent" collaboration and 3% (n=1) of the respondents reported "frequent" collaboration with the ELL site social worker (see Tables 15,16,17 and 18).

Twenty-nine of the 32 respondents had no comment regarding collaboration. Two of the social workers commented that there were none or very few ELL students in the school. A participant responded with, "We have so few ELL students that I have had little experience and contact with families like this." Another school social worker stated, "Our population has changed somewhat this year. They [ELL students and families] tend to be less needy than in the past."

Table 15

How often do you collaborate with the following people regarding ELL students?

Special Ed Teacher

Table 16

How often do you collaborate with the following people regarding ELL students?

Classroom Teacher

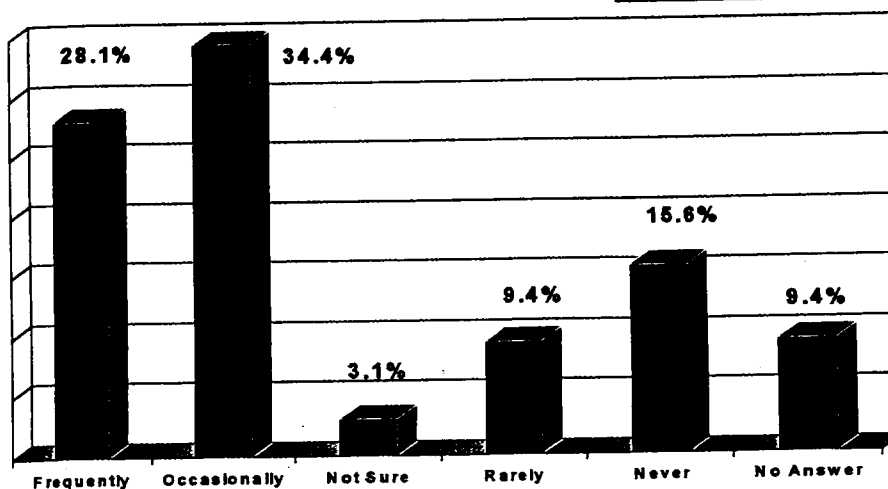


Table 17

How often do you collaborate with the following people regarding ELL students?

ELL Teacher

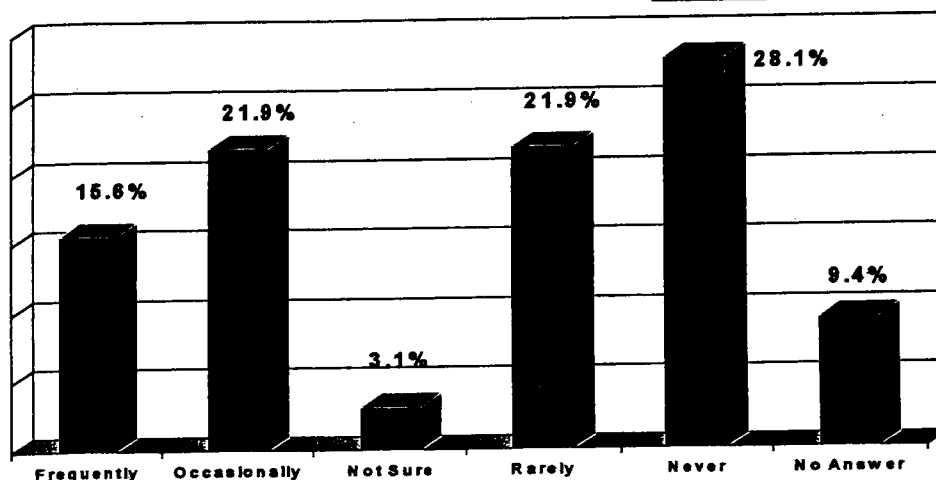
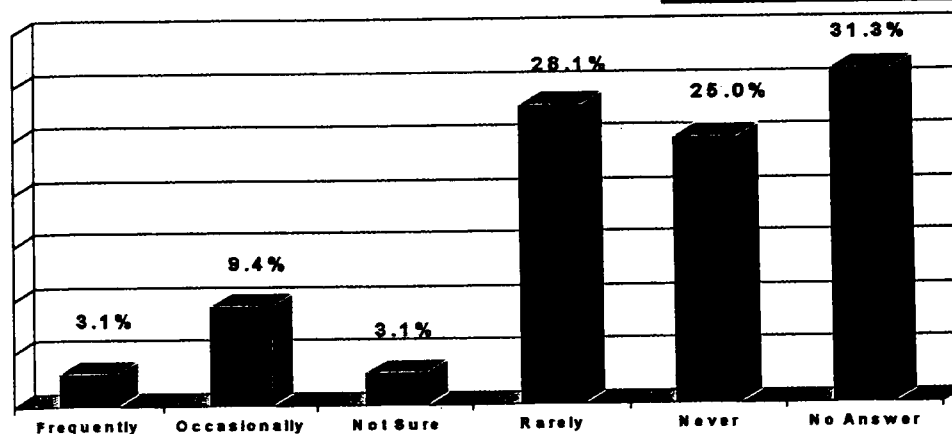


Table 18

How often do you collaborate with the following people regarding ELL students?

SSW of ELL Site



Academic and immunization records. One liaison function some school social workers may have is to assist in obtaining academic and immunization records for ELL students. At times these records can be more difficult to acquire due to distance, communication and poor record keeping. Sixty-two percent (n=20) reported that they did not assist in acquiring academic records for ELL students. Thirty-one percent (n=10) of the social workers have helped with this process. A total of five participants made comments, two of which reported helping with other medical issues such as a Medical Assistance application and providing medical information to a physician. One school social worker commented, "getting immunizations is a barrier as families must get to the clinic site at specific dates and times for their immunizations, some clinics do immunizations free of charge for children." Another worker commented, "the school nurse does that," while another participant remarked, "it is usually done before they get to school."

Counselor Role

Table 19 on the following page shows a list of counseling issues school social workers reported encountering when working with ELL students and the number of responses in each area. When asked what issues might arise in counseling an ELL student, 24 school social workers responded and often times with more than one answer. Cultural differences were categorized to include responses of culture, language barriers, adjustment issues, customs and work ethic. These responses were cited by 15 of the 24 social workers that responded to the question.

Table 19**Counseling issues with ELL Students**

<u>Counseling issues</u>	<u>Responses</u>
Cultural differences	15
Friendship and Social Skills	12
Discipline and abuse	10
Trauma	9
Same issues as other children	3
Financial hardships	3
Academics	1

Note: Some respondents answered more than once, so total is greater than 32.

One respondent stated the following when asked about ELL counseling issues, "Cultural bias, language and miscommunication about meaning such as, body language and eye contact [can occur]." Another participant stated "...occasionally there is cross-cultural biases (that can go either way)." Another school social worker responded, "Often these are issues that stem from the different expectations of their culture vs. our [culture]." A participant also wrote "...understanding 'norms' of us [our culture]."

Twelve social workers replied that counseling issues included developing friendships and social skills. Responses of "self-esteem" and "misunderstandings" were also included in this group of responses. One social worker commented, "Lack of understanding and sensitivity on the part of classmates..." Another participant stated, "...relationships with non ELL students."

Ten school social workers responded that discipline and abuse were counseling issues with ELL students. Included in this category are responses of differences in parental expectations and behavioral differences in cultures. One participant wrote, "...several students have been abused by U.S. standards. Coining [defining] physical abuse is difficult. Children become frustrated by parents rules and customs." Another stated, "...there are different ideas about what is culturally appropriate for families and children behaviorally at school, home and with friends."

Nine of the participants reported trauma as a counseling issue. Responses of anxiety, trust, fear, death and grief and loss were also included in this category. One school social worker stated, "I've worked with several students who were victims of torture or came from extremely violent situations." Another participant reported, "...war trauma and dealing with deaths of family members" as counseling issues. A participant also stated, "...fear and trust issues." Eight of the 32 participants did not respond to the question.

Three of the 24 that commented reported ELL students having the same problems as other children, with one stating, "...same things that affect all other students." Three social workers listed financial hardships such as lack of clothing and medical services, strained financial circumstances and gambling as issues encountered in their work with ELL students and their families. One participant responded that academic support was a counseling issue for her when working with an ELL student.

School Social Workers Describe their Role

School social workers were asked to describe their role with ELL students and their families. Sixteen of the 32 participants described their role as minimal, limited or

that they didn't have one at all. Of the 29 participants that answered the question, only 13 reported having an actual social work role with ELL students and their families. The responses represent more than one answer for some of the participants.

Nine social workers responded that their role was that of liaison, which includes four participants stating they link families to community resources. One participant stated, "I use the Christmas gift donations program to bridge the gap." Another social worker responded, "In the special education assessments, I believe my role is critical to help build a bridge." A respondent also wrote that her social work role is, "A bridge between family, community and school, making sure they have access to an interpreter, are handling the academics and making adjustments socially."

Six of the social workers described their role as an advocate. One explained her role as, "facilitating needs for the family like free and reduced lunch and advocating on behalf of the student." Another social worker stated, "...I organize events to celebrate their cultures in the school."

Five of the social workers also described their role as a counselor. One stated, "...a lot of hand holding through difficulties within this culture." Another comment was, "...someone to talk with about worries..." In a summary of her role, one school social worker responded, "This is a major part of my job and yet isn't included in my job description or funding. There is no recognition from the district about the extent of social work services needed for this group of students." Another social worker wrote, "This is not my primary role in the school and not the primary need but I enjoy it a lot and I believe my involvement helps the children adjust to their new environment, while sharing their history as a strength." Three social workers did not respond to the question.

Overall comments. An opportunity for comments was provided at the conclusion of the questionnaire. Twenty-four of the social workers didn't make any comments. Four of the participants had comments that were negative or issues of concern. One social worker stated, "Stop with the diversity crap and teach immigrants how to become Americans." Three other social workers wrote about concerns they had with their school district. One participant stated, "There are concerns within the district of the schools referrals of minorities to special education vs. non-minority referrals. I feel this has hindered some of the referrals." Another comment was, "This is a very needy population with very limited resources from school. I would like to be more involved and would also welcome additional training." A third social worker reported, "Students need to be in their home schools with educational support to increase peer and community involvement. Our district does not yet recognize this need."

Three of the eight participants who responded had positive comments. One respondent stated, "Our district now has an ESL intake office which provides services such as interpreters for families and other support services." Another social worker wrote, "Sorry I couldn't [be of more] help. It will be fall of 2000 when we get our first [ELL] students. I believe it will be 54 students, I may need your help!" Another response was very positive regarding the survey and addressing the issue of ELL students.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to explore the research question; what is the role of the school social worker in respect with ELL students in suburban elementary schools? This chapter will examine the findings from the study and how it contributes to the literature. It includes four areas of focus 1) practice implications 2) policy implications 3) study limitations and 4) future research. The findings helped to describe the role school social workers have with ELL students and their families.

Practice Implications in the School Social Work Role

The study findings were also supported by the literature reviewed, which included four school social work roles of advocate, group facilitator, liaison, and counselor. All four of these roles were represented in the literature review, the questionnaire and in the findings from the study. In examining the data obtained from the questionnaires, it was found that the role of the school social worker with ELL students could vary greatly from school to school. Conclusions were drawn from the findings that show the influence of the ELL population on the school social workers role in suburban elementary schools. The findings from the roles of advocate, group facilitator, liaison and counselor will be discussed in the following section.

Advocate. The school social workers in the study had a higher response to the functions in their role as an advocate. Over half of the respondents (n=17) used interpretive services, did some form of multicultural education (n=18) and included cultural information in developmental histories (n=16). A contributing factor may be the variety of school social work functions that represent the role of advocacy. As seen in the literature, advocacy can occur by representing a client or speaking on their behalf

(Pincus & Minahan, 1973). Acquiring interpreter services, providing multicultural education, assisting with the special education process, and including cultural information in developmental histories are forms of advocacy for ELL students.

When asked about interpreter services, over 50% (n=17) of the participants responded that they had needed to use an interpreter at least once during the past two school years. School districts that provide access to special phone services like the "Language Line" and other collaborative resources that assist with language barriers also see the increased need for interpreters in schools. Study findings showed that half of the participants were familiar with this interpreter service (n=16) and nearly half were not (n=15). Of the 16 social workers aware of the "Language Line" only six of them actually used it. One reason for this may be lack of need due to few ELL students attending the school. Another reason may be unawareness of the service or hesitancy to use an unfamiliar resource that involves an interpreter. There is also a cost to the school district for this service. School social workers may need interpreters for school conferences, obtaining student and family information and other meetings that that could include a special education assessment, truancy, or discipline issues.

As supported by the literature, it will become increasingly necessary for school social workers to use interpreters in order to communicate with a student's parents. Social workers will need to adjust to working with interpreters in their practice (DiCecco, 1990). Using the ELL student as an interpreter should be avoided as it compromises the parent's role and puts the child in the middle of the parent/school relationship (Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Gandara, 1989).

The knowledge of another language can also be helpful when working with a specific immigrant population and reflects an advocacy role when used on behalf of the client. Only 11 of the participants knew another language and 20 did not. An explanation for this difference may be that in the past foreign languages were not consistently required or offered at secondary schools. Spanish was the most common second language known by the participants and also the one that most respondents unfamiliar with a different language wanted to learn. Because of the increase in Spanish speaking immigrants, this has become a more frequently used language in the United States. Nearly 35% (n=11) of the respondents indicated they would be willing to learn another language. Being able to simply greet an ELL student in their native language could help the social worker develop a trusting relationship.

Multicultural education, another function of advocacy, which is also supported by the literature, allows the school social worker to provide information to students and staff on cultural issues and use their own practice skills to work more effectively with new immigrants (Pryor, 1992). A survey question asked school social workers what they have done regarding multicultural education for staff and students in their school. This question had a high response rate (n=22) with a variety of ideas to share such as a multicultural week, a Bosnian parent night, and serving on a school diversity committee.

Assessing for special education was also considered an advocacy role in the study. This function seemed dependent on the ELL population in the school. Only 25% of the school social workers assessed ELL students "frequently" or "occasionally." The findings reflected more responses with weakness (n=12) than strengths (n=6) in the assessment process of an ELL student. The language barrier and the need for a cultural

assessment in addition to this process were the main results of the findings. A few of the participants comments revealed frustration in recognizing the differences in needing special education or ELL services for some of the students. This is also reflected in the literature. Some immigrant students are inappropriately placed in learning disability programs, when their academic difficulty is actually attributed to not knowing the English language. School social workers must be prepared to access a variety of conditions in a special education assessment (Trueba et al., 1990).

A development history of the student is a part of the special education assessment process. The findings showed that 50% of the school social workers included cultural information in the developmental history. The findings could reveal that even though many school social workers (n=16) include cultural information in the developmental history some respondents consider it inadequate in providing enough information about an ELL student. This was reflected in some of the comments regarding the weaknesses of the special education process. Five school social workers commented on the need of a cultural assessment.

The findings seem to conclude that school social workers frequently use their role as advocate in their practice with ELL students and families. This is reflected mainly in functions such as acquiring interpreter services and providing multicultural education for students and staff. This role could be further expanded by some school social workers to include cultural information in developmental histories, thorough special education assessments of ELL students and gaining knowledge in other languages as influenced by the ELL population.

Group Facilitator. Findings showed the role of group facilitator was the least likely to be used with ELL students and family members. Nineteen of the 32 respondents revealed that they did not do group work with ELL students and 27 social workers don't include family members in any group work. Two reasons for these findings could be the language barrier and time limitations of the school social worker. Group work may be more difficult if participants had a language barrier. Another reason may be that school social workers respond more frequently to crisis interventions that require short-term help (Allen-Meares et al., 1996), where in comparison, group work tends to be planned and can be seen as more preventative. It can be difficult for school social workers to follow long term and positive effects of group work with family members. Although group work done early, during the initial adjustment to a new culture may be most beneficial for the clients. As found in the literature review, group work that benefits the whole family will have a direct influence on the student (Vayle, 1994).

Liaison. According to the findings, the role of liaison was also one that school social workers seemed to favor. Participants had a high response rate (n=23) when asked about cultural community resources for clients. The literature offers support by explaining, the school is usually the place where acculturation occurs (Crocco et al., 1998) and is an ideal setting to find support and community resources (Chang, 1993). Findings showed the Center for Victims of Torture and the ESL Center at Anoka-Hennepin School District were frequently listed as resources.

Findings showed the function of identifying a support system (n=9) as occurring less frequently. This could be that a support system would only be identified if there were a problem with the student as reflected in comments from the questionnaire (n=4).

School social workers may assume this is already done through school enrollment forms (n=2), although the names listed may not reflect the student's actual support system. Supported by the literature (Delgado, 1998) a broader sense of family is a part of some cultures. The individual helping an ELL student with homework can often times be someone other than a parent, such as a sibling, relative or friend especially if the parents do not know English (Delgado, 1998).

The findings showed the school social workers collaborated with classroom teachers (n=20) and special education (n=15) most frequently and less with the ELL teacher (n=12) and the least of all was the school social worker of the ELL site (n=4). This result may be partially due to better accessibility to the classroom and special education teacher, since they are in the same school. The ELL teacher and school social worker of that site may be at another school, which would make them less accessible.

A school social worker could link clients to community services, personal support networks, provide support groups to students and families as they adjust to a new culture, and be a resource for staff and other school social workers in the district, especially those at ELL sites. The findings show the role of liaison as an important part of school social work that can often times include family members of the ELL student.

Counselor. Findings reflected the role of counselor as one frequently used by school social workers. Participant responses reflected what was found in the literature, with similar counseling issues being cultural, friendships, social skills, poverty, discipline differences, abuse and trauma experienced by violence and war. Program development is needed to recognize specific mental health issues of immigrant children, such as self-esteem, trauma, stress and social identity (Matsuoka, 1990). Twenty-four participants

responded to the question of what counseling issues may arise with ELL students. The two most common responses were cultural issues (n=10) and abuse or discipline differences (n=10). One reason for the frequent response of abuse is the probability of it being a direct intervention pursued by the social worker. It can also be considered cultural due to the differences in defining abuse in other cultures.

Additional literature supported the counseling issues reflected in the findings. Immigrant and ELL students may struggle with feelings of loss, isolation, aggression and anxiety, which lead to behavioral problems in the school (Congress & Lynn, 1994). School social workers often times are unable to provide longer term therapy that some students and families need and must refer them to community resources (Freeman et al., 1998).

Defining the Role of the School Social Worker with ELL

The results of this study may assist school social workers in further defining their role with ELL students and their families. Findings show a range of social service functions from school to school and the influence of demographics. Participants often responded that ELL issues did not apply to them due to the lack of an immigrant population at their school. As cited in the literature (Camarota, 1999), the potential is great that there will be an increase of immigrant students in schools in the near future.

Through multicultural education, school social workers can also better prepare children for a more diverse society that extends beyond the school doors. As seen by using an ecological framework, changes that occur in society may eventually affect our community, the school, and even the role of the school social worker (Allen-Meaers, 1996). Even with a minimum number of ELL or immigrant students, multicultural

education could be provided to students through all- school programs as reflected in the comments of some of the questionnaires.

The social work role does not need to be determined by the number of ELL students or by the frequency of certain tasks or functions. There is a role that school social workers can have whether there are few or many ELL students in the school. By providing social services to an ELL student, their family members or educating school staff and non-ELL students a role is being accomplished. Findings also reveal that often times school social workers did not recognize or perceive their actions as a role. Participants responded to questions including multicultural education (n=22), counseling (n=24), providing interpreters (n=17), and linking clients to community resources (n=23) and yet described their role with ELL students and family members as minimal or that they didn't have one at all (n=13).

Policy Implications

The results of this study can provide three implications for policy involving social work with ELL students; 1) further evaluation of current and future programs, 2) centralizing resources in order to provide more extensive services and 3) further definition of the role of the school social worker specifically with ELL or immigrant students and their families.

Program evaluation. School social workers and administration can utilize the study information in developing new programs and evaluating existing ones. School districts and the elementary schools within them may be able to more effectively meet the needs of ELL students and their families. By including school social workers, other

school staff, and immigrant students and families in the evaluation process further information may be provided (Delgado, 1998).

A new program that could be offered by the district is a support group for ELL family members. A support group for parents or family members of ELL students could provide information about community resources, a home-school partnership and a support network that many immigrant families are lacking (Delgado, 1998; Vayle, 1992). Group members may improve their self-esteem and learn to advocate for themselves, which in turn may have a positive affect on the ELL student (Vayle, 1992).

Resources. Although school districts have ELL sites where students learn English, additional services that include family members and adjustment issues may be limited. A school district may consider a centralized ELL program that includes family members and reaches to neighborhood schools with a high ELL population. A school social worker in a district position could be an "expert" in the area of ELL and immigrant issues and also offer support to school personnel.

Findings from the study showed that 65% of school social workers responded that their training in ELL issues was "minimal." Only three out of 32 school social workers rated their training as "good." As supported by the literature, shortages of school resources and trained personnel are issues that some schools need to address (McDonnell & Hill, 1993).

Role definition. The results of the study show a need for school social workers to further define their role with ELL students and their families. By holding themselves accountable for specific functions regarding this population, more effective services can be provided. Study findings show that the role of the school social worker can vary

greatly from school to school. Consistency in practice functions that make up the role with ELL and immigrant students is crucial. The increase in immigration and ELL students provides school social workers the opportunity to further validate the need for their position and services. Also supported by the literature, the potential of social workers in assisting schools with multicultural education has had minimal recognition in school systems where their skills could help students and the school cope with diversity issues (Leckrone, 1993).

As the role of the school social worker changes, school district administrations must also become aware of the need for change. There are four main conclusions from the study that school districts should consider. One is the need for school social workers to have additional training in immigrant issues. Findings showed that 65% of the participants reported their training in ELL issues as "minimal" and only three out of the 32 respondents rated it as "good." The literature also supported that some schools need to address the shortages of trained personnel and resources (McDonnell & Hill, 1993).

Another is the increased need for interpreter services. Findings reflected that over 50% of the school social workers used interpretive services in the past two school years. It will become increasingly necessary for school social workers to use interpreters to communicate with students family members (DiCecco, 1990). School districts must include funding for these supportive services to help school social workers in their practice with ELL students and their families.

Thirdly, the need for expanded services that include ELL family members in group work and multicultural education for students and staff. Findings showed school social workers seemed to have an interest in multicultural education with 18 of the study

respondents sharing what they have done in their schools to increase cultural awareness for students and staff. Multicultural education allows the school social worker to provide cultural information to students and staff and use their own practice skills to work more effectively with new immigrants (Pryor, 1992). Group work with a parent of an ELL student can also benefit the ELL student and the whole family while adjusting to a new culture (Vayle, 1992). School districts can help provide this opportunity to immigrant families.

Fourth, the process of the special education assessment for ELL students is a difficult one that may need further development and evaluation. Issues of trauma and mental illness need additional support. As found in the literature, program development is needed to recognize specific mental health issues of immigrant children (Matsuoka, 1990).

School district administrations have the opportunity to support school social workers in the changes of their role with ELL students. These changes can start with an awareness of the new functions included in a school social workers role with ELL students. The increase of immigrant and ELL students in suburban elementary schools will make it necessary for school districts to further expand the social services provided to this population.

Study Limitations

Limitations of this purposive study were the sample size, non-random sampling and the lack of an ELL population at some of the schools. The sample size was too small to represent all suburban elementary schools. The smallest school district in the study had a lower response rate, which made a comparison between districts difficult. The lack

of an ELL population at some of the schools was also a limitation of this study. Some surveys were incomplete and participants felt questions were not applicable to them since there were few or no ELL students at their school. Another limitation was not differentiating a school social workers position in respect to funding, either general or special education. The funding status may directly affect their role with ELL students.

What makes this study unique is the focus on suburban elementary schools instead of urban, where immigrant populations have predominantly resided in the past. This is important to consider because school social workers and their administrative districts are in the midst of experiencing the impact of an immigrant and ELL population. The study also relates four specific social work roles to practice with ELL students.

Future Research

Future research involving ELL or immigrant students could include a sample size that includes more diversity and represents more of the educational system. It could include additional school staff such as classroom, ELL, special education teachers and principals. ELL students and family members could also be included to obtain the clients perspective.

Another study for future research could focus on the benefits of group work. An evaluation of a support group for immigrant families could attempt to measure the positive affects that group work could have on the ELL student and other family members.

A comparison study of services for immigrant students in urban and suburban schools could also offer an opportunity for future research. The purpose of this study could be to provide school districts that are experiencing a more recent growth in

immigrant and ELL students, information and ideas that could help them to more effectively serve this growing population in their community.

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Appendix A, B, C

School District Study Approval

SCHOOL BOARD:

Michael Sullivan, Chair
 John Peterson, Vice Chair
 Scott D. Wenzel, Clerk
 Ronald Manning, Treasurer
 Daniel Cook, Director
 Denise Dittrich, Director



Independent School District 11

Dr. Roger Giroux, Superintendent

Educational Service Center
 11299 Hanson Boulevard NW
 Coon Rapids, Minnesota 55433
 (612) 506-1000
 (612) 506-1003 FAX

January 28, 2000

To: Whom It May Concern

From: Jean A. King *J.A. King*
 Coordinator of Research and Evaluation

Re: Pamela Storry's Masters Research

Pamela Storry has our permission to conduct her MSW research project in our district. We would appreciate and look forward to a copy of her results and certainly wish her good luck in completing her degree. If there are any questions about this agreement, please call me at 612-506-1119.



DR. LINDA CRAWFORD
Director of Instructional Support Services

Telephone (612) 391-7080

January 20, 2000

Pamela Storry
MSW Student
17886 82nd Ave. No.
Maple Grove, MN 55311

Dear Pamela:

The purpose of this letter is to grant permission for you to conduct your study, "School Social Worker's Role with ESL Students," within Independent School District 279. My understanding is that ISD 279 social worker participation in this study is voluntary, individual data will not be identifiable, and the study will consume no student instructional time.

We are pleased to support your research in this area.

Sincerely,

Linda M. Crawford, Ph.D.



December 29, 1999

Pamela Storry
17886 82nd Avenue North
Maple Grove, MN 55311

Dear Ms. Storry,

I received your letter requesting permission to conduct a study involving the role of school social workers with ESL students in the Wayzata School District.

We are willing to allow you to conduct your study in our district.

Please contact me when you are ready to begin your study and I will get you in contact with the appropriate social workers.

Thank you for including the Wayzata School District as a part of your research.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Donna Marget". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Donna" and last name "Marget" clearly visible.

Donna Marget
Violence Prevention Coordinator
(612) 745-5042

DM/jw

Appendix D

Consent Letter

March 2, 2000

IRB Approval # 2000-09-2

79

Dear School Social Worker,

My name is Pamela Storry and I am working on my graduate degree in social work at Augsburg College. Currently I am completing my fieldwork at Crest View Elementary school in the Osseo school district.

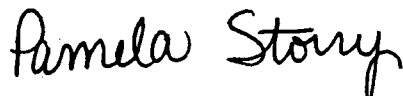
You are invited to participate in a research study regarding the role of the school social worker in respect to students in English Language Learner classes in northwest suburban elementary schools. Your inclusion in this study is because of your position as an elementary school social worker in the Anoka-Hennepin, Osseo or Wayzata school districts. The study is being conducted as part of my master's thesis requirement at Augsburg College.

The purpose of the study is to identify responses of school social workers regarding their work with ELL students and their families. The increase of immigrant children that don't speak English has had an impact on elementary schools, which may or may not influence the role of the school social worker.

The questionnaire will take approximately 15 minutes of your time to complete. Your participation in the study will allow me to gather accurate and complete data from the questionnaire, which focuses on your role as a school social worker. Please do not put your name or any other identifying information on the survey or envelopes. All completed questionnaires will be kept confidential and in a secure place in my home. The returned questionnaire will be anonymous and no one will be able to identify you. The participating school districts will have access to grouped survey results at the end of the study. There are no identifiable risks for you in participating in this research study nor are there any direct benefits or rewards offered as incentive. Your participation is entirely voluntary and will not affect your relationship with the school districts in the study or Augsburg College. By returning a completed questionnaire you have given your consent to participate in this study. Feel free to skip any questions that you feel uncomfortable answering or don't apply to you. Please complete the questionnaire even if the school you work at is not currently an ELL site. Responses can be based on your experiences with previous ELL students.

If you choose to participate, please complete the survey and return it in the enclosed envelope by March 20, 2000. It has been stamped, addressed and a pencil for you to keep is included for your convenience. A reminder letter will also be sent in the near future. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at Crest View Elementary school, 612-561-5165, where I am completing my internship. You may also contact my thesis advisor, Dr. Lois A. Bosch at 612-330-1633. I appreciate the time you have taken to participate in this research study.

Sincerely,



Pamela Storry

Appendix E

School Social Worker's Role with ELL Students Questionnaire

SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER'S ROLE WITH ELL STUDENTS QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete your responses as accurately as possible.

1. Gender ☐ Female ☐ Male
2. What educational degree do you hold? ☐ BSW ☐ MSW ☐ Other
3. How long have you been a school social worker? _____
4. Are you a school social worker at another school? ☐ yes ☐ no

If response to is yes, please differentiate schools by using a 1 for one school and a 2 for the other school as it is applicable in the remainder of the questionnaire. This questionnaire pertains to elementary schools only. Do not include information from a secondary school.

5. What is the enrollment of the school(s)?
☐ less than 100 ☐ 300-499 ☐ 700-899 ☐ 1100 or over
☐ 100-299 ☐ 500-699 ☐ 900-1099
6. Is your school an ELL site? ☐ yes ☐ no
7. How many ELL students would you estimate are currently enrolled in your school(s)? Use your school boundaries as a guide.
☐ 0-4 ☐ 10-14 ☐ 20-24 ☐ 30-34 ☐ 40-44 ☐ 50-54
☐ 5-9 ☐ 15-19 ☐ 25-29 ☐ 35-39 ☐ 45-49 ☐ 55 or over
8. How would you describe your training in ELL issues?
☐ minimal ☐ adequate ☐ good ☐ excellent
 What was the most helpful? _____
9. Is there a family liaison position at your school(s)? ☐ yes ☐ no
 Do you feel it is helpful to you when working with ELL students? ☐ yes ☐ no
 Comments: _____
10. As a school social worker, how many times would you estimate that you needed to use an actual interpreter in the 1998-99 school year to present? _____
 Are you familiar with the Language Line? ☐ yes ☐ no
 If you answered yes, have you used it? ☐ yes ☐ no
 How many times would you estimate you have used this service? _____
11. Do you know another language? ☐ yes ☐ no
 If you answered yes, what language do you know? _____
 Do you feel it benefits you in your position as a school social worker? ☐ yes ☐ no
 If you answered no, would you be interested in learning another language? ☐ yes ☐ no
 If you answered yes, what language would you be interested in learning? _____
12. What community resources that are specific to a culture have you referred clients to?

13. How do you identify an ELL student's support system?

14. In your estimation, how often do you collaborate with the following people regarding ELL students?

ELL teacher ☐ frequently ☐ occasionally ☐ not sure ☐ rarely ☐ never

School social worker
of ELL site ☐ frequently ☐ occasionally ☐ not sure ☐ rarely ☐ never

Classroom teacher ☐ frequently ☐ occasionally ☐ not sure ☐ rarely ☐ never

Special education
teacher (if
applicable) ☐ frequently ☐ occasionally ☐ not sure ☐ rarely ☐ never

Comments:

15. As a school social worker, what have you done to educate staff and increase cultural awareness in your school?

16. Do you assist in obtaining immunization and academic records for ELL students? ☐ yes ☐ no
Comments:

17. Have you ever done group work with ELL students? ☐ yes ☐ no
Have you ever done group work with family members of an ELL student? ☐ yes ☐ no
If you answered yes, did you feel it was beneficial? ☐ yes ☐ no
If you answered no, would you consider group work in the future? ☐ yes ☐ no
Comments:

18. As a school social worker, how often do you assess ELL students for special education services?

☐ frequently ☐ occasionally ☐ not sure ☐ rarely ☐ never

What are strengths and weaknesses in this process when working with an ELL student?

19. Do you include cultural information in an ELL student's developmental history? ____ yes ____ no
Comments:

20. If you counsel an ELL student, what issues might arise?

21. How would you best describe your role as a school social worker with ELL students and their families?

22. Any other comments?

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY.

**Please return the questionnaire in the enclosed envelope
by Monday, March 20, 2000.**

Please do not put your name on this questionnaire.

Appendix F
Reminder Letter

IRB Approval #2000-09-2

March 10, 2000

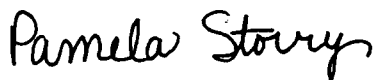
Dear School Social Worker,

This is a follow-up letter to remind you of the questionnaire I sent recently. I am a graduate student in the Master's of Social Work program at Augsburg College. My research study is about the role of the school social worker with English Language Learner students and their families.

I want to remind you that the questionnaires need to be returned by March 20, 2000. I again invite you to participate in this research study if you have not already done so. Your participation is voluntary. If you have any questions please feel free to call me at 612-561-5165, where I am completing my internship. My thesis advisor, Dr. Lois Bosch can also be reached at 612-330-1633.

Thank you for your contribution to this research and your time in participating in this study.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pamela Storry".

Pamela Storry

